



# Stranded in hospitals

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MORE than 70 older patients are stuck in hospital as they have nowhere to go. This equates to up to seven wards full of people taking up beds.

SA Health statistics show last September 86 older people were in metropolitan hospitals waiting to go elsewhere. Overall there was an average of 74 in the year.

SA Health acting chief executive David Swan said the patients were medically stable, ready for discharge and waiting for post acute-care options to be finalised.

Their average length of stay was 16 days.

*The Advertiser* revealed this month between 32 and 40 people with disabilities were waiting to return home. At least one had been waiting for six months to be placed.

"Patients returning home may receive assistance from services such as Metro Home Link, the Royal District Nursing Service, or Domiciliary Care SA," Mr Swan said. "A range of Commonwealth-funded aged-care programs also are available to provide assistance and support to help older people live independently in their own home."

Health Minister John Hill said the federal and the state governments were investing in 38 new transitional care places for people to help them go home after a hospital stay.

"The Transition Care Program is designed to help older patients regain their independence and confidence by providing extra services needed, such as physiotherapy and nursing support, when they've returned home," he said.

Doctors have warned when beds

are "blocked", the logjam filters back to the emergency departments.

The Australian Medical Association's Federal Budget submission, released yesterday, called for the development of a "bed watch" scheme to help tackle access block.

President Dr Andrew Pesce said health needed a "stimulus package". He highlighted areas that need immediate attention, including indigenous health, mental health, general practice, sub-acute care, long-term care for people with serious disabilities, medical training, rural and remote health, and e-health. "There must be funding for the Prime Minister's promise to fix our hospitals, and there must be funding for the reforms necessary to fix others areas of our ailing health system," he said.